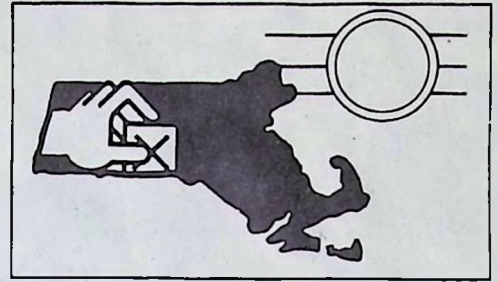


Facts on Mail-In Voter Registration

initiative petition drive



THE MAIL-IN VOTER REGISTRATION INITIATIVE WOULD: simplify current voter registration procedures by allowing all eligible citizens to register by mail. Any person qualified to vote would be able to register by completing a simple form, called an "affidavit of registration" in the presence of an adult witness (any person 18 years of age or older). The affidavit could be completed at any place and at any time, as long as it was returned to the local election office by the registration deadline. Affidavits could be submitted by mail or by hand-delivery.

Affidavit forms would be available in post offices, city and town halls, other locally specified places, and could be requested by mail. Any person or group wishing to obtain more than 50 forms could be assessed a reasonable fee, not to exceed printing costs.

MASSACHUSETTS NEEDS THIS LAW: Mail-in voter registration is a much simpler and easier system than the present Massachusetts law, which is more restrictive than that of any other industrial state. Under current state law, prospective voters can register only at the local election office or at a specially-designated temporary site. The procedures for arranging special sites are largely controlled by local registrars and vary widely from town to town.

More than 1/4 of all eligible voters in Massachusetts are not registered - a total of approximately 1,100,000 people. The percentage of unregistered is substantially higher among certain groups, such as blacks, Hispanics, other minorities, low income people, youth and the disabled.

Registration by mail would be more convenient for all voters, but it is especially important for seniors, working people, handicapped persons, and others who can't get down to the local election office during business hours. Mail-in registration also would benefit cities and towns by reducing the need for special out-of-office registration sessions. Many citizens, including the disabled, who now request special registration could be accommodated by mail-in registration. Furthermore, in many communities it will ease the problems of long registration lines near election deadlines.

Twenty-three states plus the District of Columbia now allow mail-in registration. The nation's four most populous states -- California, New York, Texas and Pennsylvania -- all use this system.

THE INITIATIVE GUARDS AGAINST FRAUD: This initiative proposal contains a strong anti-fraud provision requiring local registrars to send a non-forwardable, first class mail notice to any registrant whose name does not appear on the annual street list. If the notice is returned undelivered, the registrant would be subject to automatic challenge at the polling place. In addition, the maximum penalties for false registration would be doubled, to a \$2000 fine and two years imprisonment.

Under current Massachusetts law, there is no systematic procedure for double-checking registration affidavits against annual street lists. Because the mail-in initiative would establish such a systematic procedure, it would eliminate much of the fraud that is possible under the current system. In addition, each registration affidavit would have to be signed under the penalties of perjury by both the registrant and an adult witness.

There is no evidence that fraud is a problem in any of the 23 states with mail-in registration. The Massachusetts Secretary of State's office has conducted two surveys of the mail-in registration states and, without exception, the election officials in these states praise mail-in registration and report no fraud problems. The Federal Election Commission (FEC) has also done a detailed study of mail-in registration and found "no significant percentage of fraudulent registration in any one of the mail-in registration states", and concluded that "fraud is an issue more perceived than real."

THESE STATES ALREADY HAVE VOTER REGISTRATION BY MAIL:

Alaska
California
Delaware
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Maine
Maryland

Minnesota
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
New Jersey
New York
Ohio
Oregon

Pennsylvania
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Dist. of Columbia

JOIN WITH THESE MASSACHUSETTS SUPPORTERS OF MAIL-IN VOTER REGISTRATION: (1985):

(...a partial list...)

Governor Michael S. Dukakis
U.S. Senator Edward M. Kennedy
U.S. Senator John F. Kerry
Secretary of State Michael J. Connolly
Mayor Raymond L. Flynn, Boston
Rep. John A. Businger (D-Brookline)
House Chair, Election Laws Comm.
and 11 legislative co-sponsors in
the Massachusetts State Senate
and 64 legislative co-sponsors in
the Mass. House of Representatives

American Federation of State, County &
Municipal Employees (AFSCME),
Council 93
Association of Community Organizers
for Reform Now (ACORN)
Black Political Task Force
Boston Children Services Association
Cambridge Comm. on the Status of Women
Citizens for Participation in
Political Action (CPPAX)
Civil Liberties Union of Mass.
Coalition for Basic Human Needs
Commission on Handicapped Affairs,
City of Boston
Council for a Livable World
Council for a Nuclear Weapons Freeze
Democratic Party of Mass.-1985 Platform
Family Services Association
of Greater Boston
Hotel & Restaurant Workers, Local 26
Int. Ladies Garment Workers Union
League of Women Voters of Mass.
Legislative Council for Older Americans
Massachusetts AFL-CIO
Mass. Council of Human Service Providers
Mass. Easter Seal Society
Mass. Fair Share
Mass. Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

Mass. Human SERVE
Mass. Jobs with Peace Campaign
Mass. Natl Organization for Women
Mass. Nurses Association
Mass. Public Interest Research Group
(MASSPIRG)
Mass. Society for the Prevention of
Cruelty to Children
Mass. Teachers Association
Mass. Womens Political Caucus
Minority Organizations for Voter
Education and Registration (MOVER)
Natl. Association for the Advancement
of Colored People (NAACP)
Natl. Assoc. of Social Workers, Mass.
New Bedford Women's Center
Nine to Five
Rainbow Coalition
A. Philip Randolph Institute
Service Employees International Union,
(SEIU), Locals 285 & 509
State Student Association of Mass.
Tenants United for Public Housing Prog.
United Auto Workers (UAW-CAP)
United Food & Commercial Workers,
Local 616
Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament

The 1st Ten Signers of the Initiative:

Michael Joseph Connolly, Roslindale
Arthur R. Osborn, Lexington
Melvin H. King, Boston
John A. Businger, Brookline
Alex Rodriguez, Boston
Janice L. Nadeau, Worcester
Joel Ario, Cambridge
Thomas G. Evers, Jr., Malden
Judith S. Hass, Chelmsford
Robin Leeds, Dorchester

(Note: These individuals and organizations publicly support the Voter Registration by Mail legislation of 1985 (H.4759 & H.4760), and/or endorse the statewide Campaign for Mail-In Voter Registration. Listing here does not necessarily mean support for any political campaign committee engaged in the initiative petition process scheduled for Sept.-Dec. 1985.)

Campaign for Mail-In Voter Registration

25 West Street, 5th floor, Boston MA 02111
Telephone: (617) 542-5761

Petitions and materials are also available through members of the state steering committee:

League of Women Voters - (617) 357-8380 MASSPIRG - (617) 423-1796
Mass. Fair Share - (617) 654-9000 CPPAX - (617) 426-3040
Rainbow Coalition - (617) 424-1041
plus regional offices and coordinators throughout Massachusetts.